

Foreword

This publication is a collection of selected papers presented at an international conference organized by the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland in May 2010. All texts included in this book have been written at that time and although two years have already passed, the essays should still be regarded as an important commentary on contemporary events, also from a more recent perspective.

The book contains a number of papers providing a thorough analysis of the processes that occurred in the United States in the initial period of the Barack Obama's administration. The first part of the publication is focused on the issues of U.S. foreign policy concerning such areas as Africa, Japan, Iran, Germany, Central and Eastern Europe. The second part refers to the political process and political institutions exemplified by the Vice Presidency of Joe Biden and the relationship between the American president and the Supreme Court. The last part consists of papers dealing with social issues such as racial policy, popular movements and Obama's public image. All these perspectives combine to form a portrayal of America at the beginning of Obama's administration. The image is probably not entirely complete, but very interesting.

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